

## IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

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| <b>Student Matriculation No.</b> | <b>Glasgow 2605320K DCU</b> <b>Charles 74947989 Trento</b>   |
| <b>Dissertation Title</b>        | The Regional Order in Asia-Pacific: The Role of the Joint Sino-Russian Air Patrols and the Dokdo/Takeshima Dispute |

### INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

|  |                                 |   |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Reviewer 1 Initial Grade</b>  | <b>Reviewer 2 Initial Grade</b> | <b>Late Submission Penalty</b><br><i>no penalty</i> |
| <b>Word Count Penalty</b> (1-15% over/under = 1gr point; 15-20% over/under = 2 gr points; 20-25% over/under = 3 gr points; more than 25% over/under = 0 fail)<br><b>Word Count:</b> 20899 <b>Suggested Penalty:</b> no penalty |                                 |   |

### JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

**Final Agreed Mark.** (Following correspondence reviewers should list the agreed final internal grade taking before and after any penalties to be applied).  
**Before Penalty:** B1 [17]      **After Penalty:** B1 [17]

### DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

| <b>Assessment Criteria</b>   | <b>Rating</b> |
|--|---------------|
| <b>A. Structure and Development of Answer</b>  |               |
| This refers to your organisational skills and ability to construct an argument in a coherent and original manner |               |
| • <i>Originality of topic</i>  | Excellent     |
| • <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>   | Excellent     |
| • <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>                                  | Very Good     |
| • <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>                           | Very Good     |
| • <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>   | Good          |
| <b>B. Use of Source Material</b>   |               |
| This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner                   |               |
| • <i>Evidence of reading and review of published literature</i>  | Excellent     |
| • <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>                             | Excellent     |
| • <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>  | Very Good     |
| • <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>  | Excellent     |
| <b>C. Academic Style</b>   |               |
| This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner   |               |
| • <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>  | Very Good     |

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|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| • <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>                              | Very Good    |
| • <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>   | Excellent    |
| • <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>                               | Yes          |
| • <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i> | Not required |
| • <i>Appropriate word count</i>  | Yes          |

### ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

#### **Reviewer 1**

This is a highly original and well-focused dissertation. It skilfully combines three topics: Sino-Russian military cooperation, strategic competition between the US and China, and a territorial dispute between Japan and South Korea over Dokdo/Takeshima islands. The analysis is thorough and meticulous.

The literature review chapter demonstrated the Author's broad familiarity with all the three topics as well as with the debates on relevant regional bilateral relations. The clarification of the international legal background (both regarding the AIDZ and a legal dispute over Dokdo/Takeshima) constitutes another strong point of the dissertation.

The methodological choice (process tracing) is well justified and skilfully executed. The theoretical framework, in turn, is rather under-developed. Even though neoclassical realism Type III is referred to, this theory was neither well analysed nor practically used to guide the analysis.

Given the focus on the Sino-Russian military relationship, a more detailed analysis of key limitations and scope of this area of cooperation would have been a plus.

The empirical part – the analysis of four case studies – is systematically organised and easy to follow. The process tracing of particular cases relies on a number of triangulated sources and is most plausibly the most detailed account of four joint Sino-Russian air patrols to date. The use of figures and tables provided a helpful summary of key findings. The analysis situates Sino-Russian patrols in a broader context of great-power relations in East Asia.

In terms of the form of the dissertation, a clear separation of particular chapters and a numeration of section headings would have made the structure more legible.

#### **Reviewer 2**

I think this is a knowledgeable dissertation that addresses „the nexus between the emerging Sino-Russian military relationship and the impact on the regional order.” The dissertation investigates “what role does the development of the joint Sino-Russian air patrols over Dokdo/Takeshima play in the regional order.” This topic is very timely, considering the growing hostility between the U.S. and its allies and China and Russia.

There is much to like about the dissertation. Not only is the topic timely, but the empirical part of the investigation is well executed. It is clear that you know a lot about regional security settings. Having said that, I believe several changes could have made this dissertation even stronger.

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My most significant concern about the dissertation is its almost exclusively empirical character. The general topic is well selected, but it could be more apparent what is niche the dissertation addresses and what specific contribution to our understanding of the topic (beyond description) the dissertation makes.

Second (and this is closely related to the first), I think the dissertation does an excellent job when it comes to providing an overview of existing literature. However, I think it could have taken a few steps further and turned the overview into a more mature literature analysis. It would have been beneficial to synthesize the literature and show what debates exist and what gaps remain in existing conversations.

Third, I wondered what benefits the dissertation gains from the references to the theoretical lenses of neoclassical realism. This theory is introduced on pages 28 - 30 but I could not see its lenses being used throughout the investigation. It seems that the section about theory is incorporated into the dissertation for the sake of having the section about theory but does not bring benefits to the analysis.

Last I think much more space could have been devoted to answering the research question. I think it is a pity as more analysis would enhance the dissertation, which in its current form seems to be a bit description heavy.